

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

August 21, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20502

Through: Mr. Edward G. Buikema
Regional Administrator, Region V
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you again for taking the time to visit Minnesota again yesterday. As we discussed, our state has suffered substantial loss of life and property as a result of recent heavy rain and flooding in southeastern Minnesota.

While preliminary damage assessments (PDAs) are being currently conducted and will be forwarded soon, I can attest from two days of visiting many of the hardest hit areas that the magnitude of this natural disaster far exceeds the thresholds needed to qualify for federal relief.

Accordingly, under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare an expedited major disaster for the State of Minnesota as a result of the severe flooding in southeastern Minnesota, which occurred on August 18, 2007, and continuing. Response and recovery operations are still being conducted. Six counties -- Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Steele, Winona, and Wabasha -- have been significantly impacted by this event. Initial damage assessments show 4,200 homes were affected or destroyed.

In response to this situation, I have taken appropriate action under Minnesota Statutes and in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act, and declared a State of Emergency on August 19, 2007, specifically directing activation of the Minnesota Emergency Operations Plan and the State Emergency Operations Center.

The State Mitigation Plan (SMP), which is a standard plan, was approved by FEMA on April 25, 2005.

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A Preliminary Damage Assessment has been requested and is underway. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. Therefore, I am specifically requesting the Public Assistance Program and the Individual Assistance Program -- including the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, and Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Program -- for Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Steele, Winona, and Wabasha counties, and the Hazard Mitigation Program statewide. I would like to reserve the right to request additional counties and assistance at a later date.

Enclosure A furnishes information on the nature and amount of State and local resources that have been and are being used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster.

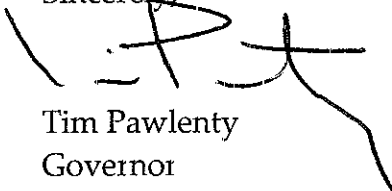
I certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume all of the applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

In addition, I anticipate the potential need for assistance for the removal of debris which poses an immediate threat to life, public health, and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, if debris removal is authorized, the State agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

I have designated Kris Eide to be the State Coordinating Officer and John Kerr to be the Deputy State Coordinating Officer for this request. They will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in conducting damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,



Tim Pawlenty
Governor

Enclosure

ENCLOSURE A TO EXPEDITED MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION REQUEST

Supplementary Information and Justification

STATE AND LOCAL RESPONSE

HSEM staff was assigned to work in local emergency operations centers, including those established in Fillmore, Houston and Winona counties. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was activated on August 19th. All flood calls were routed through the Minnesota Duty Officer to the SEOC Operations Desk from 7 a.m. to 12:00 midnight each day.

A number of State agencies responded to the flood threat, and flooding conditions:

- The State Patrol provided perimeter and access control to flood areas and traffic control on the state highway system. Troopers assisted with search and rescue, recovery, and door-to-door home checks. The State Patrol Aviation Unit performed aerial surveys.
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency consulted with local units of governments on handling spills and cleaning up debris. It dispatched two crews and a vacuum truck to the area for heating oil, petroleum, and hazardous materials spills. The crews are available to assist citizens with fuel oil spills in basements or for other situations. Staff members were assigned to work in local EOCs to help local officials plan for debris removal and waste management, as well as disposal issues for a large volume of waste such as mobile homes.
- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture worked with local officials on feedlot management issues. The Department also had inspectors for food, dairy and meat located in the flood zone. Plans were in place to move product out if needed. The MDA instituted its Farm Advocate Program that provides farmers, small business operators and other residents access federal aid and other resources available to them in a time of crisis. It also activated its Rural Finance Authority Programs to provide financing for buildings that have been lost to flooding and to help farmers restructure their debt and repair flood damage.
- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Waters consulted with local governments on the status of flood control structures, and inspected dams in Olmsted and Winona counties. The Division of Waters also dispatched crews to document high flows and recover information to document this event. Eighteen DNR conservation officers assisted the local sheriffs' departments, fire departments and police departments with search and rescue efforts. Using three airboats and four other boats, they rescued 40 to 60 people from rooftops and flooded homes. Conservation officers checked state forest campgrounds and other DNR facilities that have been flooded.
- The Minnesota Department of Transportation provided barricades, set up road closures, and coordinated with counties on bridge and road closures.
- The Minnesota Department of Health activated its Department Operations Center (DOC), monitored community water supplies and provided well-testing kits. It also assisted with wellness checks on nursing homes in the area and with evacuation of the Rushford Assisted Living Facility.
- The Minnesota State Fire Marshal sent staff to the region to coordinate with local fire departments and coordinated with the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs' Association which contacted fire departments in the affected area to determine the extent of damage to apparatus and other equipment. The Fire Marshal alerted owners of pipelines for monitoring of pipeline river crossings and pumping stations located along rivers in the area. Staff also monitored local gas service to assure that there was a plan in place to restore service should gas service be shut down;

- The EMS Regulatory Board coordinated with local ambulance services, and helped Rushford obtain replacement ambulances for the unit that was destroyed in the flooding. The EMSRB also made arrangements to ship supplies to the disaster area, and tracked hospital bed availability within the 125-mile area.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services tracked the status of child care in the region.
- The Minnesota Department of Military Affairs provided three helicopters for search and rescue operations and other missions as necessary. The National Guard provided 87 soldiers to Winona County, 77 soldiers to Houston County, and 78 soldiers to Fillmore County. The Guard also provided a communications trailer to Fillmore County.

Voluntary relief agencies also responded to the flooding problems. Specifically, the American Red Cross activated eight emergency shelters in Caledonia, Brownsville, Winona, Rushford, St. Charles, and Wabasha, Olmsted and Dodge counties. The Southeast Minnesota Red Cross Chapter provided a hot line for "Safe and Well" information, and provided drinking water and home cleanup kits. The Salvation Army provided canteens, feeding stations, drinking water, and clean-up kits. MN/WI Baptist Kitchen set up feeding stations in Winona.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evaluated the levy in Houston and Rushford to ensure structural soundness. The Corps activated its Emergency Operations Center.

Once the flood waters receded, information and guidance regarding re-entry into flooded areas and recovery activities were distributed to local units of government. Many state agencies posted guidance to their web sites.

Fillmore County: The 1,700 residents of Rushford were all evacuated from their homes. A shelter for evacuated residents was established at TRW. Gas, electrical and phone service were all cut off. Cell phone coverage was interrupted due to the flooding. The County hired a contractor to assess the structural integrity of buildings in Rushford, and starting August 21, the Sheriff's deputies escorted residents to retrieve property and pets from structures that were determined to be safe. Rushford sewage plant was overrun with flood waters. The Rushford fire engine and turn-out gear was flooded.

Houston County: Three deaths were confirmed. The County requested a mobile command vehicle from Olmsted County for the City of Caledonia. The City of Houston was evacuated due to water levels at the levee, and a shelter established at the Caledonia Municipal Auditorium. Another shelter was established at the Community Center in Brownsville. Residents of Valley View Nursing Home in Houston were relocated to a nursing home in Caledonia, while residents of Heritage Manor Assisted Living Facility were relocated to Spring Valley and Mabel. The County conducted search and rescue operations in many parts of the county.

Winona County: Four deaths were confirmed. An estimated 6,375 families were impacted by the flooding. City of Goodview evacuated 345 homes. The City of Winona evacuated 35 people from an apartment complex. Several others were evacuated from neighboring communities and taken to the shelter at St. Mary's University. The college football team assisted with providing security within the city. The County requested mutual aid for a variety of professional services to aid in the response and recovery. The County Human Services Department was accepting applications for assistance from flood victims, and arranging temporary housing. Winona County Public Works was inspecting bridges and removing debris that was blocking water flow, as well as making temporary road repairs.

- On August 18th at approximately 10:30pm HSEM was notified of significant localized flooding in the Winona, Houston, and Fillmore county areas. This flooding was a result of rainfall totals ranging from 8 to 11 inches in the Southeastern portion of the state. SEOC activated and declared operational at 7:00am on August 19, 2007.

American Red Cross Preliminary Survey
Of Residents
Wednesday, August 22, 2007
As of 2:00 p.m.

Jurisdiction	Destroyed	Major	Minor	Affected	Inaccessible	Totals
<i>Houston Co.</i>	26	5	6	853	20	910
<i>Dodge Co.</i>	0	3	7	322	0	332
<i>Olmstead Co.</i>	2	10	24	463	0	499
<i>Fillmore Co.</i>	140	191	290	887	0	1508
<i>Wabasha Co.</i>	9	44	44	788	0	885
<i>Steele Co.</i>	7	6	15	102	0	130
<i>Winona Co.</i>	148	211	107	166	0	632
Totals	332	470	493	3581	20	4896

- State of Emergency Declaration:
Signed August 19, 2007
Counties included:
 - o Fillmore
 - o Houston
 - o Olmsted
 - o Steele
 - o Wabasha
 - o Winona

National Guard support:

- 2 Helicopters (8 soldiers) provided search and rescue operations.
 - Will fly only during daylight hours
 - Operating out of St Paul airfield
- Winona County
 - Quick Reaction Force (QRF) in Stockton, MN 24 soldiers.
- Houston County
 - all soldiers have departed Houston county.
- Fillmore County
 - (RRF) 86 soldiers are deployed to Rushford.
 - Comms trailer w/ 9 soldiers operating in Rushford

- State of Minnesota damage assessment process with FEMA has begun. A meeting took place in Rochester at 1400 on Wednesday, August 22, 2007. Both individual and public assistance assessments will be conducted. The assessments will start Wednesday afternoon.
- HSEM will have the declaration request to the Governor by **FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 2007**.

Critical Infrastructure

Rail transportation could effect the movement of grain by rail after harvest.

- Railways largest impact

Canadian Pacific.

- Two CP bridges have been damaged as a result of the flooding in southeast Minnesota: bridge in Minnesota City; bridge vicinity of Weaver, MN.

DM&E:

- There are several locations where track and bridges have been damaged along their line that parallels roads from Eyota, MN to Minnesota City, MN (Hwy 14 and County 23).

IC&E:

- There are several locations where track has been damaged and/or impacted by debris along the line that parallels Hwy 26 south from La Crescent to the Iowa border.
- Rail lines on the Minnesota side of the river expected to be operational again in a week to 10 days
- Rail lines on the Wisconsin side of the river to be operation within the next two days.

Agricultural Issues

- Flooding is affecting the crops in areas under water, no volume numbers in the area currently available. Small lakes have sprung up around much of the region forcing cattle to high ground and covering acres of farmland. Uncounted acres of corn and soybeans have been washed away and destroyed.
- One farm north of the City of Rushford had a loss of 1500 turkey's. Dept of Agriculture worked with the Board of Animal Health and disposal has taken place. One ag. chemical facility in Rushford was the only chemical facility affected. Dry fertilizer as well as pesticides.
- Up to 20 dairy farms may have been impacted. Inspectors are contacting farms to assess damages
- Food facilities are being inspected.

General:

- MPCA is in the process of cleaning up fuel oil spills (12+) in peoples homes. This number is expected to increase as people return to their homes.
- The MDH Department Operations Center (DOC) has been activated
- MnDOT working on getting weight restrictions lifted on all roads in the area for the next two weeks for trucks hauling debris.